

From Coast to Coast: A New Librarian's Summer of Professional Development

This fall, I have begun my second year as the liaison librarian for the English Department and Spanish Program at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI). I spent my first summer traveling from coast to coast to attend four different professional gatherings. I will summarize my experiences and highlight my major takeaways from the following:

- LOEX (conference)
- SALALM (conference)
- International and Area Studies Workshop (ALA pre-conference workshop, sponsored by SALALM, WESS, and CRL)
- ACRL Immersion (teacher track)

LOEX – Hyatt Regency Hotel, Denver Tech Center, Denver, CO – April 30-May 2, 2015

I kicked off my summer with a trip to my home state of Colorado. As a MLIS student, I met a teaching librarian during my practicum at the University of Colorado at Boulder who highly recommended LOEX. I had never heard of the conference, but I was excited to experience it on familiar turf. It would be an opportunity to reconnect with classmates from the University of Denver's MLIS program and other familiar faces. Additionally, it was a chance to meet new professionals with whom I would cross paths again throughout the summer.

True to Denver's character, the conference had a beer and brewery theme. Erin Rinto and Melissa Bowles-Terry, from University of Las Vegas, in their session, "[Taste testing research topics: Assessing the Scope and Feasibility of First-Year Students' Research Paper Topics](#)," talked about building an assessment tool to improve library instruction for new researchers. Alison Hicks, from the University of Colorado at Boulder, explored the tension between workplace information literacy (IL) and academic IL in her session, "[Drinking on the job: Integrating Information Literacy into the Curriculum](#)."

Plenary speaker, Anne-Marie Dietering (Oregon State), in her talk, "[Reflections on Reflection. Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Embrace the Meta](#)," encouraged librarians to remember that we are serving students. She suggested librarians examine their own practices, assumptions, and the power structures (library, catalog, campus, larger society, etc.) underneath which information professionals operate. Dietering advocated using critical thinking skills and self-reflection to make changes to enhance, not oppress, students' imaginations and learning. She set the tone for the next sessions I attended that centered on themes of applying critical theories to librarianship.

In the session, "[Elevating source evaluation: Teaching and un-teaching authority in the critical library classroom](#)," Katelyn Angell and Eamon Tewell (Long Island University, Brooklyn) described source evaluation activities that not only involved active learning and creativity, but allowed students to think about whose voices are included and excluded in scholarly conversations. In "[Teaching Students the 'how' and 'why' of Source Evaluation: Pedagogies that](#)

[empower communities of learning and scholarship](#),” Juliet Rumble (Auburn University Libraries) provided three classroom activities, including one on teaching popular v. scholarly without a checklist. In her session, “Bridging Language Barriers by Translating Conceptual Explanations into Physical Models,” Angela Lucero (University of Texas at El Paso) reminded librarians that the term “bibliographic” implies a controlled environment that we do not live in anymore—that our users do not typically experience in their information seeking. She gave a very thoughtful presentation on how feminist theory and neuroscience inform the activities she does in an ESL classroom.

LOEX was small enough for me to not feel overwhelmed but large enough to offer diverse topics and put me in touch with new people and ideas. My best takeaways were the practical and workable advice I got from the sessions on instruction and the satisfaction of my intellectual curiosity. Someone said to me before I went, “You’re going to LOEX? It is a good conference for you to go to at this stage of your career.” I came away thinking that it would be a conference for a librarian at any stage of their career; the conference provided a showcase for new talent and ideas for changing times.

SALALM – Princeton University, Princeton, NJ – June 13-17, 2015

SALALM’s 60th conference was hosted by Princeton University. The organization is loyal to its roots as the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, the home to many Latin American bibliographers and professional book vendors from Latin America. It is also the home to librarians working in Spanish, Portuguese or indigenous languages, Iberian Studies, and Latino Studies. Among its subcommittees and interest groups, SALALM also supports professionals engaged with instruction, digital scholarship, and activism (see [ALZAR](#)). This was my second year of attendance.

Lilia Moritz Schwarcz (Universidade de São Paulo/Global Scholars Program, Princeton University) gave the keynote address on “The Long Journey of the Portuguese Royal Library: Books, Freedom and the Symbolic Power of Libraries,” in which she explained the history of Portuguese royal library being shipped to Brazil in the 19th century where it still remains as part of the Biblioteca Nacional. Her translated book, *The Long Journey of the Royal Library* also recounts this story. In other news, Iberian Studies in SALALM changed its name to SALALM Iberian Studies (SIS). In the SIS subcommittee meeting, we discussed what we might do as an organization to support the collection and preservation of information related to the Movimiento 15-M or *indignados* movement in Spain.

Additionally, a new interest group on Digital Scholarship in Latin America, called DiScola, was created by those of us called to support new methods of scholarship at our institutions. Next year’s conference theme is “*Nuestro norte es el sur*” (Our North is the South): mapping resistance and Resilience in Latin American and Iberian studies. I am currently working with my colleague, Barbara Alvarez (University of Michigan), and the University of Virginia’s Scholars’ Lab to hold a workshop to foster skills in digital scholarship during SALALM’s conference there in May.

I also want to note that our host, Fernando Acosta-Rodriguez, Princeton's Librarian for Latin American Studies, Latino Studies, and Iberian Peninsular Studies, shared some treasures from the Firestone Library Special Collections. Among many other amazing documents and objects, we got to see handwritten correspondence between Luis Buñuel and Carlos Fuentes. To check it out, here's a link to a photo on [SALALM's Facebook page](#).

International and Area Studies Workshop – The Book Club of California, San Francisco, CA – June 26, 2015

This one-day workshop, sponsored by SALALM, WESS, and CRL, covered Latin America, Spain and Portugal in the morning and France, Italy and Germany in the afternoon. I learned more about why purchasing books in foreign languages requires a certain level of expertise beyond just being fluent in that language. For example, many publishers in Latin America create very limited print runs of books. Small presses and vendors often lack an online presence. Additionally, larger vendors who ship to the U.S. are not always able to get ahold of these limited titles, thus creating a need to travel to purchase materials for the library. I also learned that books in Spanish can be simultaneously published in two countries by different publishers, so duplicate copies may be shipped to you on Latin American and European approval plans.

My biggest takeaway was learning that a *segunda edición* may not actually be a second edition of a book in Spanish, but rather, a reprint. This new knowledge came in handy when a graduate student contacted me this fall to ask where he might get a recommended text for a course. The second edition was published in Spain, and I was only able to find it in the online catalog of Casalini Libri. My representative there confirmed that the second edition was indeed a reprint (thanks, Sara!). Then, after reaching out to my colleagues in SALALM, I was able to give my graduate student a short list of trustworthy vendors in the U.S. who sell to individuals and carry the first edition at an affordable price. Of course, I was able to pass on this list to a faculty member who two weeks later asked a similar question.

I also attended the WESS Cruise in the San Francisco Bay during my trip and met many WESS members for the first time. It was chilly out on the water and the fog had rolled in, but the clouds broke above the city, flooding it with sunlight just as we were turning back under the Golden Gate Bridge.



ACRL Immersion – Seattle University, Seattle, WA – Aug. 2-7, 2015

ACRL Immersion is a 4.5-day long intensive program of training and education. I attended the teacher track, which covers everything from 'Understanding Yourself as a Teacher' to learning theories, classroom techniques, assessment, and developing skills in persuasion and advocacy. To my surprise, we did not spend a lot of time discussing the IL Standards or the new ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. One day, we held an unconference during which another SALALM member and I talked about foreign language instruction. There was also a table that featured discussion about critical theory in the library profession. Another group met with Debra Gilchrist (Pierce College), an Immersion leader, to delve deeper into assessment and the new Framework. The instructors were all excellent. Daisy Benson (University of Vermont) led my cohort and Melissa Bowles-Terry (UNLV), who I ran into at LOEX, was also an instructor.

One of my favorite readings from Immersion was Mandy Lupton and Christine Bruce's "Windows on information literacy worlds: generic, situated and transformative perspectives," the first chapter of the book *Practising Information Literacy: Bringing Theories of Learning, Practice and Information Literacy Together*. The authors argued that the generic approach to IL, a sort of checklist and Standards-based approach, can also be political, values-laden, and ideological as is often the criticism of the other two approaches: social and transformative. Another was Emily Drabinski's 2014 article in the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, "Toward a kairos of library instruction." In it, she discusses the context in which the Standards for IL were developed and introduces a critical perspective from which to consider the implications of IL instruction in higher education.

My biggest takeaways included learning how to use David A. Kolb's theory on learning styles as a new approach for structuring my instruction sessions, understanding myself as a teacher in order to be more authentic in the classroom, and focusing on student-centered approaches to

engage students in their own learning. Furthermore, the practice we did with persuasion and advocacy techniques has been helpful to me in refining my verbal communications with my library and liaison areas. As I prepare to attend the [Feria Internacional de Libros \(FIL\)](#), an international book fair in Guadalajara, Mexico, for the first time in November, I have needed to persuade my library that book-buying trips are cost-effective and still necessary in the digital age.

To be continued – *A continuación*

Each of these professional gatherings has enhanced my ability to serve the faculty and students at IUPUI better and to grow as a professional. I would highly recommend them all. I look forward to following up with WESS in the spring about my trip to the FIL.

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